

**VA**U.S. Department  
of Veterans Affairs

## News Release

Providence VA Medical Center  
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### State of the Providence VA Medical Center

PROVIDENCE, R.I. – Veterans Affairs Secretary Dr. David Shulkin presented the challenges facing the Department of Veterans Affairs during his State of the VA briefing Wednesday, May 31. The Providence VA Medical Center is working to meet these challenges locally, and improve services for Veterans.

Providing greater choice is one of Shulkin's top priorities, and in addition to the Choice program, the Providence VAMC now has agreements with more than 120 community providers.

Quality of care is another of the secretary's top priorities, and the Providence VAMC maintained the Veterans Health Administration's highest rating – 5 stars – in April, and we are now ranked 9th out of 146 rated VA Medical Centers across the country.

Improving timeliness of service continues to be priority for VA. More than 98 percent of Providence VAMC patients receive an appointment within 30 days of their preferred date, and new patients are getting their first primary care appointment in an average of 13 days. Now we are also able offer same-day access to primary care and mental health for Veterans who need it, and we are continuing to explore ways to make care and services more accessible for Veterans.

As Shulkin pointed out, 20 Veterans dying daily by suicide nationwide is completely unacceptable. The Mental Health Service at the Providence VAMC provides care for Veterans at the Providence facility and clinics in Middletown, R.I., and New Bedford and Hyannis, Mass. Services include suicide prevention, and also treatment and support for homelessness, post-traumatic stress, substance use and other challenges, any of which can contribute to Veteran suicide. Veterans in crisis and their loved ones can also call 1-800-273-8255 and Press 1, chat online at [www.VeteransCrisisLine.net/Chat](http://www.VeteransCrisisLine.net/Chat), or send a text message to 838255 to receive confidential support 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, 365 days a year.

"These achievements are the result of a sustained effort from our staff, volunteers and community partners," said Dr. Susan MacKenzie, director of the Providence VAMC. "Working together, we can continue to provide the high-quality care Veterans have earned through their service and sacrifice."

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